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Allen-Scott Report

Peace Moves In Viet Nam

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Mr. Attac

A crucial aspect of the Johnson administration's master plan to "bring the Viet" Nam conflict from the battlefield to the negotiating table" is replacing the existing military rule with a broadbased civilian "government of national reconciliation."

Consisting of an indirectly, "elected" national assembly, a premier and cabinet, this regime would take the lead in seeking a negotiated termination of the fighting.

Tagged to play a key role in this intricate backstage strategy is Edward Landsdale, the controversial retired Air Force major general now back in Saigon for the announced purpose of heading a special team of U.S. advisers to the Viet Nam Central Rural Construction Council.

It is this still largely paper organization that is to be Landsdale's principal tool in setting in motion the series of developments designed to bring about the peace-aiming "government of national reconciliation."

While congressional and other authorities know that the President and his inner advisers have a master Viet Nam "peace" plan it is shrouded in closely-guarded secrecy. Other than vague references to it in White House briefings and the President's private talks with carliers, nothing has been diavulged.

The nearest a high-placed official has come to saying anything publicly about the hushhush plan was by Walt Rostow, chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council. And his generalized and chigmatic comments are meaningless except to those, with some awareness of their true import.

In a press interview last week while vacationing at a South Carolina resort, the one-time Massachusetts Institute of Technology economics professor said:

mysterious in wars. But our bombing strikes have made a big difference. The U.S. has three goals in Vict Nam: To help the new and younger generation of Vietnamese get settled and get started. Then to help the officials start and maintain a modern government. Third, to keep pressure on North Viet Nam through telling bombing strikes."

While the administration is enforcing a tight blackout on its "peace" plan, some significant information has been pieced together. Public discus-

sion is hampered by the highly classified nature of much of it.

But it is possible to report the

But it is possible to report the following:

A masor phase of the plan is a huge refugee program, under which hundreds of thousands of peasants and villagers are to be "relocated and rehabilitated." General Landsdale will be in charge.

This refugee project will be very costly. Exactly how much is conjectural. But it is certain to run into hundreds of millions of dollars.

The military regime of Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, the tarttongued young air brigadier, is to be ousted. Just how that is to be brought about is not known. It may turn out to take quite a bit of doing, as Ky, with characteristic ebullience, considers himself a "man of destiny."

But the master plan calls for his military rule to be replaced by a civilian "government of national reconciliation."

It is to be broad-based, including Buddhists, Catholics and other elements.

It is to be brought into existence by the indirect "election" of a national assembly. As a popular election is precluded by the widespread ground fighting, it is proposed to "elect" the assembly members by having the village chiefs designate them.

This is justified on the ground.

that these local leaders were clected by popular ballot last year.

What, if anything, is done to keep village chiefs from naming Viet Cong to the national assembly is another blank spot. Perhaps it is contemplated to screen the assemblymen. Perhaps not.

In any event, the national assembly will select a civilian prentier who, in turn, will set up a cabinet representative of all major elements.

This presumably broad-based and U.S.-backed civilian "government of national reconciliation" will launch a two pronged flort—to negotiate a cease-fire, and to get underway a wide-langing economic restoration and development program, with he U.S., of course, footing the bill.

Also envisioned is a start on vithdrawing U.S. troops.

This will depend on how this concept of events works out. But as the President eagerly fictures it, the homeward receployment of troops should be in progress by January. That's what he has been broadly hinting to congressional and other callers.

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